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ONCE IN A WHILE SOMEONE FIGHTS BACK!

In Florence, Italy, in 1321 a young man sat silently on a grassy bank at the edge of the Arno River. A white rose with its tender petals perfectly in place floated by in the gentle waters. His heart leaped in ecstasy. As he reached for the rose, a shadow loomed at his side. Startled, he turned and looked directly into the dark eyes of the poet Dante Alighieri, who whispered, "Always remember the darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis."

The Poet, The Count, and The Peddler, Chapter 1

*Challenge institutions! Challenge theologies!
 Challenge traditions!*

Mario Ferrara

The Poet, The Count, and The Peddler

Mario Ferrara arrives from Sicily in New York's Little Italy in 1923 at age nine and grows up to become a baker of bread in his family's bakery. He finds an outlet for his frustrations over greed, prejudice and injustice in his writing, a compilation of History, Sicilian folklore, and descriptions with images that make apparent his lifelong obsession with Dante's *Inferno*.

He becomes a radical leader during the turmoil and the discontent of the '60s calling for a general strike. A vindictive prosecutor, a manipulative businessman, and a ruthless cardinal tied to the Vatican Bank try to destroy him, and he is embroiled in a tumultuous murder trial. His life and all he holds dear—his family, his friends, and his heritage—hang in the balance.

The Poet, The Count, and The Peddler is a captivating blend of historical fiction,

mystery, philosophical truths, and imaginative fantasy. For the most part, however, the world of *The Poet, The Count, and the Peddler* is a very real world—a world of city streets filled with immigrant families, of courtrooms and boardrooms, and of offices belonging to high-ranking religious and political figures.

Anthony Bottagaro is a seasoned executive, an acclaimed speaker, and an award-winning author. In his quest for justice and peace, he has met with leaders of Congress, the State Department, the Pentagon, the White House, and the United Nations. He has also met with noted religious leaders including Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. His works have received national and international recognition. Bottagaro narrated and produced the award-winning documentary adaptation of his first book, *To Create a World More Human and More Divine*, that premiered at the United Nations.

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